

Dakota, and Italy. Colonel Sloma then joined the New York Army National Guard and was deployed to Afghanistan with the 27th Infantry Brigade from Syracuse in 2008. There, Colonel Sloma served as the Director of Intelligence for the Task Force Phoenix in Kandahar. Colonel Sloma later retired in 2013 with the rank of Colonel as the New York State Counterdrug Task Force Commander. Colonel Sloma had over 20 years of active duty experience and 31 years of total military experience, earning the Legion of Merit award, Bronze Star, Joint Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Commendation Medal, three Meritorious Medals, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, and the Airborne Badge.

I am honored to recognize Colonel Richard J. Sloma for his service to our great nation and upon being named "2017 Pole of the Year" by the Syracuse Polish Scholarship Fund, Inc.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF
WILLIAM H. HECHT

HON. DEVIN NUNES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Mr. NUNES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and public service of William H. Hecht.

Born in Tifton, Georgia, Bill received a Master's of Divinity from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, and an M.A. in philosophy from Washington University. After serving as a Lutheran pastor at Faith Lutheran Church in Mt. Vernon, Illinois, he became a campus pastor at the University of Oklahoma.

Bill had a long history in both Missouri state politics and on the national stage in Washington, D.C. In 1967, he became the executive director of the Missouri State Republican Party. Two years later, he served as Vice President of the American Security Council, and in 1971 he became Executive Assistant to the Chairman of the House Committee on Internal Security. After serving as an advisor and spokesman for the Reagan for President Campaign, Bill founded the respected government relations firm Hecht, Spencer and Associates in 1981.

Bill was well known for his political camaraderie and engaging conversation. He was a regular at the Capitol Hill Club, where he was respected by lawmakers for his sharp wit and political advice. Bill also took great pride in mentoring some of the brightest young minds in Washington, dedicating his time to getting to know countless young people and their families. Bill was always direct, and even in the digital media age he exemplified the value of authentic relationships and person-to-person communication.

Outside of politics, Bill was deeply dedicated to his family and friends. He was a devoted husband, proud father, and loving grandfather. Bill touched the lives of many and will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

LAWRENCE ZHAO

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Lawrence Zhao, who is a 7th grade student at Next Generation School in Champaign, Illinois. Lawrence will be competing in the 2017 National You Be the Chemist Challenge. The You Be the Chemist Challenge is an interactive academic contest that invites students from all around the United States in Grades 5 to 8 to explore chemistry concepts and their real-world applications.

Lawrence has advanced through many rigorous levels of competition over the past school year to qualify for the national competition, which is held Monday, June 19th, in Washington D.C. The competition starts out at a local level, where students participate individually, with first the distribution of a quiz that relates to chemistry and those who pass it are eligible to participate in the local contest. The local contest consists of a quiz-bowl style format containing several rounds of multiple choice questions.

Lawrence won the local challenge and had the opportunity to compete in a similar style state-wide competition. Having received the highest score at the state challenge, he advanced to the national challenge. I applaud Lawrence Zhao for his exemplary performance thus far, and I wish him the best of luck in not only the challenge, but all his future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, due to a personal conflict, I was unable to make votes. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 300, and YEA on Roll Call No. 301.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for votes Monday, June 12, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea on Roll Call votes 300 and 301.

HONORING THE WOMEN'S ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Women's Enterprise Development

Center (WEDC) based in Westchester County, New York, which is celebrating its 20th Anniversary on June 15th.

Since its establishment in White Plains, NY, in 1997, the Women's Enterprise Development Center has helped hundreds of aspiring entrepreneurs start and grow their own businesses by providing them with training, advisory services, and access to capital. The more than 1600 graduates of WEDC's 60-hour Entrepreneurship Program have achieved business success in many fields ranging from accounting to moving organic food products to construction and landscaping to senior services. WEDC's clients include women who lack access to traditional business and financial resources. In 2015 alone, WEDC provided 1,666 motivated clients with the tools they needed to succeed.

The accomplishments of WEDC have not gone unnoticed, and over the years it has gained support from the federal, state and local governments as well as major corporations such as IBM, M&T Bank, MasterCard, Morgan Stanley Wealth Management, Verizon, and Wells Fargo. WEDC was recently designated as the New York Empire State Development Entrepreneurial Assistance Program (EAP) Center for the Mid-Hudson Valley, and its work has been recognized by the County governments of Westchester and Rockland as well as the U.S. Small Business Administration, which named it a Women's Business Center in 2003.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have worked for the last two decades with Anne Janiak, a founder and the CEO of WEDC, and her team to support entrepreneurial women in New York's Hudson Valley. I urge my colleagues to join me in applauding their 20 years of service to the Lower Hudson Valley and congratulate them as they celebrate this important anniversary.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAMES B. RENACCI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Mr. RENACCI. Mr. Speaker, I was absent during rollcall votes No. 300 and No. 301. Had I been present, I would have voted yea on rollcall No. 300, and yea on rollcall No. 301.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA NATIONAL PARK SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the District of Columbia National Park Service Improvement Act, a bill that would clarify that D.C. has the authority to enter into cooperative management agreements (CMAs) with the National Park Service (NPS) to maintain and invest in NPS properties in the city. NPS is the steward for many of our country's most beautiful natural wonders, but they are uniquely responsible for most of the small, urban parks here in the District. Given NPS's